

On 15th March 2023 ActEarly researchers took part in the Spring Festival of Family wellbeing in Tower Hamlets, London organised by Bromley by Bow Centre. Approximately 360 people attended the community and family event, taking part in interactive sessions. Many organisations came together under one umbrella to support, engage and share what they have on offer for the community. Here is a summary of the ActEarly projects that took part in the day.

Food Improvement Goals in Schools (FIGS)

For our school food provision project, we wanted to 'test-out' the materials we will be using with children when we visit local primary schools. Our activities were very popular and were liked by children and parents. Children's activities were a good way for them to change attitudes on unfamiliar foods and generate discussion. Parents' feedback centred around preparation of school food (recurrent issue) and portion sizes (reduction is a concern). Parents told us free school meals are key for local families.



Healthier Wealthier Families

For our research proposal to set up and evaluate co-located money advice in health settings for parents of newborns called Healthier Wealthier Families we needed to know what parents of young children thought of the idea. As a result of talking to parents at the Festival of Family Fun we had confirmation that money worries are common at this stage of life and that local mothers would appreciate a dedicated service that is easy to access, and timed to be routinely available as part of infant health checks.

Overcrowding

To inform a project about household overcrowding, we wanted to understand if residents considered the subject as relevant to them, to learn how they talked about their space and to find out whether they would be happy to talk about their own experiences. Through interactive activity with children involving lego, stickers and various craft materials, we learnt that many visitors to the stall considered this topic very relevant to them. Both parents and children described how living in cramped homes affected what they could do and several were happy to be contacted further about opportunities to take part in research.



Diets of children in Tower Hamlets



To inform a project which is trying to better understand the diets of children living in Tower Hamlets, we spoke to children about food and why a healthy diet is important for our growing bodies. It served as a stepping stone to gauge their understanding around diets and healthy eating, and speak to parents about their children's dietary patterns.



This work was undertaken as part of ActEarly: A City Collaboratory approach to early life changes to improve the health and opportunities for children living in areas with high levels of child poverty; Bradford, West Yorkshire and Tower Hamlets, London. ActEarly is supported by the UK Prevention Research Partnership, an initiative funded by UK Research and Innovation Councils, the Department of Health and Social Care (England) and the UK devolved administrations, and leading health research charities.

Partners

